

SUNDAY NIGHTS AT ABC NO RIO
A LOST VAGUEST-STYLE TESTIMONIAL

It is strange to be a part of a something
akin to a community of outsiders.
By definition: how can outsiders form
a community?

We all grew up with some myths or other.
There is the hellish baggage of the
hippies. The peace/love myths. There
are the Paris in 10s, 20s and 30s myths,
too. There are the Charlie Parker
wallpaper eyelids myths. The reptile
cleavage myths Phil Specter never wrote
about... etc.

Certain substances ancient and not
so ancient changed my life. I was
initiated into life as funhouse: layer
upon layer of energy swirling around...
and people, within that swirl, wearing
mask after mask in a continual parade
charade. I have heard both Dave Huberman
(who's great) and John S. Hall (who
knows he great) refer to ABC No Rio
as 'a church.' If it reminded me of
church, I would never show up. Pleah.

On the other hand ... A church, yes.
But of what religion?

The dripping water, the rhythmic jangle-bangs
of the radiator, the occasional film
noir roach crawling down the recently
blackened walls...

Earlier I referred to this wild bunch
(or F-troop) who hang at ABC No Rio
on Sundays as being outsiders... But
that presumes that devotees / disciples
/ slaves / pawns of the 'dominant'
mainstream culture of lies, bullshit
and sanctified zombie-hood are inside
anything. They're not. Not really.
Nothing except a big fat brick wall
behind which is the salacious decadent
time honored grin of the cross-eyed
golden calf.

Drained after another marathon Sunday
at 156 Rivington I go home with dilated
pupils, unable to sleep even though
i feel i must report to my decapitato
job the next day. I feel exposed like

photo film: to purges, to spells, to
formulae, to anger, to T(t)ruth(s).
Then I usually sit down and eat me
an enormous fat hunk of tofu as big
as Toots Shore's ass.... with lots
of pancake batter and hairspray on
it.

I've been to a lot of clubs. Been
in a lot of rooms full of a lot of
people... but in No Rio - finally -
I feel an atmosphere of consciousness
(konshushnuss) going on... to sit by
this river of words and behold the
sea of faces ... and ways ...

It is an arduous thing to do -- sometimes
I don't have the energy and cease absorbtion.
But somewhere inside me I feel some
connections being made.

The culture needs No Rio and all of
the information the No Rio people have
to tell. (If the culture "at large"
won't admit as much that isn't surprisig,
and also isn't our fault!) I wonder
how (or if) that culture (kulchur)
will ever hear that information without
destroying it, diluting it, screwing
it and ruining it. A question too
mind-boggling to think about. After
all: the people with the cash and the
property do not want poets, they don't
want psychedelized messiahs, they
don't want anything that will challenge
their Death Trip.

Who cares? Fuck 'em! No Rio is a
life trip. In this Piscean garbage
bin of a time zone, with the barest
hints of fragile Aquarius about, No
Rio is the best there is.

Half amino acid and half hotel: the
open mike nee cabaret mr. courtney's
been consumately MCing for so many
years would've made Hugo Ball drool,
Apollinaire bloat his 'droid and Gertrude
pork Hemingway with a Yuletide itch.

Danke.

Eat Lead O(a)r(e) Be Le(a)d.

Winchester Chimes

Artifice



Mathew Courtneys
Wide open Cabaret



"WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ALL
THESE MOTHERLESS CHILDREN?"

WINCHESTER CHIMES

It must have been like steering
a bicycle through a herd of lost and unorganized sheep, sheep
that are free for a moment. He did this for four and a half
years, which earned him sainthood and an unerring knack for
surrealism.

I saw Roger Manning, Billy Syndrome, Evil Jim, Jan Schmidt,
Orion, Elmer Lang, JD Rage, little Sarah Hauser, David Huberman
an elegant anarchic drunk what was his name, oh, Prichard, Saral
Brightrose, everybody everybody everybody. We hated, admired,
slept with, cheated, and loved each other - you know, what people
do. It cost a dollar to attend, but it was pretty fucking free.
Due to punk rock I can drop my ego, be a fool, and not care, so
probably I was furiously learning the whole time, a few were.
Some were just madmen granted a temporary three hour stay
of conviction, and some were deeply untalented, hideously
persistent and envious on top of it.

Jennifer Blowdryer

BACKGROUND PHOTO:
ADAM PURPLES GARDEN

BUTT.

MATTHEW
COURTNEY

I LIKE
YOUR
BUTT.

WHAT IF
I SAID
I NEEDED
YOUR BUTT.

THE SHAPE
OF YOUR
BUTT, IS
THE SHAPE

OF
THINGS
TO
COME.

I LIKE THE
WAY YOUR
BUTT FEELS.

I LIKE
THE WAY
YOUR BUTT
SOUNDS
(TALKS).

I KNOW
WHAT
YOUR BUTT
NEEDS-

IT
NEEDS
ME
BABY.

BANG YOUR
HEAD ON
THE
SWEETNESS
OF YOUR

BUTT.
AND THEN
SOME.

HO BUNCH.
LOVE IT A
HO BUNCH.
GO AHEAD-

SAY IT-
HO
BUNCH !
DO IT.

YOUR BUTT
REMINDS OF
ANOTHER
BUTT...

BUT, YOUR
BUTTS
BETTER.

YOUR BUTT
KNOWS WHAT
IT MEANS
TO BE-

A GREAT
BUTT. ASK
ANYONE.

I THINK
THAT THERE
BE DIMPLES-

ON YOUR
BUTT
ACTION.

DIMPLE ACTION
ON YOUR BUTT
ACTION.

DO IT.
ASK
ANYONE.

I'VE SEEN
HOME MOVIES
OF YOUR-

BUTT ACTION.
ACTION
PACKED
HOME-

MOVIES OF
TOTAL BUTT
ACTION.

SAY IT AGAIN,
BUTT
ACTION.
DO IT.

NEXT ISSUE: ARTYFUX
THE PUNK YEARS

Oxra P. Dingle

the question remains
are we really slaves
to the consequence of coition

I dream of a gentle giant
who stands on the beach
folds me in his arms
you wave from beyond the breakers
the very movement of your arms a lie

I am perfectly happy alone
most of the time
but it is not enough
sadly I repossess myself through others

if I could get the smell of the old lady
out of the apartment/I'd take it
so what's the dilemma

the mountain of sand shifts beneath my feet
the concrete bed is cold and hard
that sliver of a moon
does not give off enough light

Marguerite

12/27/88

Hush ladies and gentlemen. The beauty
is asleep. She is refulgent with
a sparkling tincture which connotes
brilliantly the merit of her lovely
graces. The vibrating acoustics
in the room are enough to wake her
out of her blissful stupor.
Please allow her to slumber in peace,
so her luminosity and glowing aura
reflect her splendid form to the hilt.
When up its an inscrutable draft that
magnetizes me to her fantastic
enchantment. No poet has depicted such
luscious lips, such seductive emanations,
such marvelous thighs, such a rich
accumulum of cosmological intelligence,
such indomitable perfection that all the
gods in heaven are weeping of jealousy.
I must guard her with my best efforts.

12/88
Orion Feig

and now,
the WEATHER...



THE MEDIA ARE THE POLICE
THE POLICE ARE THE MEDIA

MAXIMALIST INTERNATIONAL

Lying snug against the curb of Rivington Street, a pile of shit cradles an apple dropped there, minus two bites. A fly has landed there, like an alien spacecraft touching down on an undiscovered planet, it hovers for a second, then drops down, slowly working its way across the surface of this pitted, aromatic landscape, collecting dinner and data. Several feet away, a door opens, warm light and laughter slide out into the evening for a second, then the door slams shut. The fly is curious about the source of that fleeting warmth, and even more about the various smells and sounds which had wafted across the sidewalk with the opening and closing of the door. The fly lifted off and buzzed lazily towards the door, and after waiting only a few minutes, enters through the door riding on the shoulder of an unsuspecting biped. Then, finding a convenient crack in the wall the fly settles in to observe the curious drama unfolding in the room.

WIDE OPEN CABERET
ALL WELCOME!

Another individual who strongly influenced the character of the open mic was Winchester Chimes. "Winny did these 'snorks', they were improvisational musical jams by non musical people, everyone would just have fun, everyone always wanted to be in one of Winnys plays, he did a lot of stuff trying to get people involved in different projects and he liked the energy that came from getting different people working together. He was a true renaissance man and jack of all trades-master of none, he was a painter, sculpter, poet, playwright and musician.

Recalls the Baron: "When Winny was in the hospital finding out how much of a toll AIDS was taking on his system, the word was that it was bad, way bad, people gathered at Gargoyle Mechanique to talk about the situation and what we could do. Everyone agreed to pool their money and get him an apartment with a garden where he could live without worry until he passed", there was a pause, a collecting of thoughts that seemed to sum up the passing not just of an inspired individual but an inspired era in which an unattainable goal had seemed for a moment, within reach. "But he died about two weeks later and so that was it."

After Winny died Mathew never emcee'd again.

people were coming to a morally bankrupt city, there were cracks to fall through then, now most of the cracks have been sealed up - thanks to Herr Ghouliani ET. AL. - theres not as many real characters anymore, brilliant eccentrics, there's no place for them left on this gentrified island. Back then it was hard to even get people to come to the neighborhood for the weekly readings cause they were getting robbed and raped on the way to and from and of coarse it was popular for teenagers to go out gay bashing."

Roger Manning: "There was a freindly competitiveness going on, as the evening progressed everyone got really into the thing and each act would get better and it was like "don't be the one to let us all down, we've just all had our minds blown by the last performer and how could it happen AGAIN? " But it did, all nite, it would keep getting more intense. People were just doing incredible stuff".

Robin: "Mathew would try to engage the audience a lot and people just naturally liked him, there were always lots of guys and girls in love with him, He would make up these word poems by asking each person in the audience to give him one random word & then he'd string them all together into a freaky jazz poem".

Just inside the door is a small table with a piece of paper on a clipboard, with a pen. The piece of paper says at the top: SIGN UP SHEET, IF YOU HAVEN'T BEEN HERE BEFORE YOU CAN SIGN UP TO READ FIRST. Inside a small crowd is milling around, drinking from bottles in paper bags, and smoking.

MASTER BUSINESS

Winchester Chimes (2-6-86)

I am your readymade
Your toilet with a halo
Your phosphorescent dayglow
Aging spastiC Nero:

I walk on books/ Words are dirt
The cheeseY smut / Of the twisted gut

I am your fastfoodmetalchain / Your brain down the drain
Your manipulative master / Who makes profit from disaster:

I walk on you / I turn you 'round / Your emptiness
Will make me proud:
I AM MASTER BUSINESS! (Kneel Dog: Crawl)
I AM MASTER BUSINESS! (Give me your pathetic all!)

I am your own division! / The poseur called "success"!
Your buying/selling structure! / I am Master Business!

I have reduced all Earth to cash!
Money is God
And employees are trash!!!!

"Perhaps the square
simply cannot
conceive of the
circle."

- Uncle Shits
Dunkirk
1875

This issue covers a period of ABC NO RIO, 85-90, during which the Wide Open Cabaret, hosted by Mathew Courtney, became a central, defining flashpoint of activity both within the NO RIO collective and within the East Village open mic scene. Many of the regular attendee's of Mathews open mic still feel today that they learned the essentials of their craft at those readings, and many of them have since gone on to other, expanded venues such as Bob Holmans Poetry Project and the Nuyorican series. One of the problems with putting together this issue was the inability to interview Mathew for his insights on that period, since he has since relocated to the west coast. In talking with other individuals active within the scene then, he is spoken of with reverence as the driving force behind the open mic and the personality which shaped it into the "Most egalitarian open mic venue for artistic expression in New York City," as Baron Von Blumenzack has characterized it.

In discussing Mathew Courtney the same adjectives seem to crop up consistly, charismatic, sincere, open minded, tolerant, funny and caring. Robin Goldsmith remembers him this way "He could engage anyone immediatly and draw them out and charm them and make them feel good, he was interested in everything and everyone, he made people feel close to him."

"Once during a reading the mailslot in the door opened up and a long phlorescent light bulb came shooting into the gallery and shattered against the wall, and since similar stuff had already happened, Mathew decided that he had to do something. So he asked this guy that was hanging around at the time named Billy Sleaze, who was from Kenya and had purportedly been a mercenary and a martial arts insructor, if for 20 bucks he would work the door and keep an eye on things. Things did calm down a bit after that. Once I remember there were these kids sitting on our stairs yelling and playing their radio loud, and Billy went out and said "Hey shut up, theres a poetry reading going on, and it was kinda wierd, but they respected him. Billy introduced a strange element or feeling into the readings and not everyone liked it so that didn't last too long."

"There was this guy, called 'Jack the heckler' who came every week and heckled you, or at least sat there and made these idiotic comments. This went on for quite a while, but one time Christian X. Hunter was reading this poem and sure enough Jack starts heckling, and Christian reaches behind a chair where he had a pie waiting specially for Jack and he let him have it right in the face."

Jennifer blowdryer has characterized the time period in general as of being, with the exception of the open mic, "low energy, kind of a void, at least as far as activities going on at NO Rio, because I think they were having a lot of problems with the city and with the building and their own personal problems. If you came to the collective meeting to make a proposAL you were lucky if 1 or 2 other people came, it seemed like they were just older, cranky, pissed off artists bickering with eachother. One of the main differences between NO RIO and the other places which picked up the open mic afterwards, like Gargoyle Mechanique or collective unconscious, was NO RIOs tolerance for the wierd scary people who were drawn to the place, in the absence of real structure or rules these people seemed to come in droves and thrive and work out their stuff and contribute in ways that wouldn't have been possible at other places, they would have been ostracized."

Baron Von Blumenzack:

"8 minutes, no buzzer, thats important to remember, 8 minutes-no buzzer, you could perform for 8 minutes and you were expected to know when 8 minutes was up or if you were boring the hell outa everybody, you could go on longer if you could see that the audience was enjoying it but Mathew would never say a word, it was left up to you."

DEAD DOMAIN

Winchester Chimes (5-18-87)

This Dead Domain / Plastic & Ptomaine / Poisoning of the Brain /
The Sane are Insane; Normalcy is Inane / Status means Nothing /
Gilded mask of Failure / Covering Dead Nature

This Dead Domain / Center of the Cancer / Ignoring Every Answer /
Applauding every Lie; Monday-Friday Zombies / Rats inside a
Ratmaze / The Gentle are run under / The Artists torn Asunder

Secret Police & Liars: Gouted Holy Spires: Stagnant Roles &
Choices: Silenced Dissident Voices: No Freedom in the Land: Just
Real Estate Scams: & Spectacle so Empty: Land of Humpty Dumpty

My aren't you Impressive! So Braindead and Regressive! With
your Cheesey Degree! So Amoral & Sleazy! My aren't you a Pillar
of this Grotesque Malformed Structure! My aren't you a Winner in
a Radioactive Rupture! My ain't this Rewarding! A Life of Money
Whoring! So Lucky are the Fallen --- With Armageddon calling ...

This Dead Domain / Controlled by the Profane / A Species down a
Bank Drain / The Legacy of Old Spain / This Rotten Culture of
Drunks & Male Vultures / Feast on the Corpse of Real Life...
robots in the twilight.....

Mathew started the open mic early in 1985 with a small group of readers and performers who had loosely been associated with the burgeoning anti folk movement. Roger Manning, one of the early regulars, is representative of the sensibility reflected in their work of the time. Although Roger does sing folk music, it is closer to the original aspirations of traditional folk in its political aims and lyrical content, edgy, challenging, funny and controversial, as opposed to the watered down feel-good sterility that mainstream folk had degenerated to by the 80s. Roger Manning describes the open mic thus "It's as if Patti Smith and Hank Williams had a baby, and we were it".

In the begining the regular attendance was low, it consisted of an intimate circle of roughly 20 people meeting weekly to perform for eachother and hang out. Many were crossovers from the loft-based open mic across the street called 'the Fort' and hosted by Latch. In 86 suddenly the open mic scene in N.Y. exploded and Mathew Courtneys Wide Open Caberet could count on a steady stream of from 75 - 100 people a week. This was the heyday of what playwright and performer Robin Goldsmith calls "The downtown trash scene", and many of its star characters went on to varied degrees of fame in the larger mainstream performance world. The nature of this success has engendered equal amounts of pride and cynical musing among those who performed regularly, many of whom believed in the purity of non-commercial performance venues which should ideally have no value as 'stepping stones' in order to maintain the love of the art itself.

WELCOME TO THE PLEASURE PALACE Part I

Welcome to the pleasure palace where anything is possible, . . . like the roof's been blown off and your sucked through manhattan smog and burst on a painted universe of forever ever stars, . . . or, sometimes—the bottom drops out to leave you smashed against a round boulder pile three floors below,—bleeding rat bitten cold and crippled, . . . maybe, this time the walls will expand till your small as a man/women in a void. The weirdist was when the room shrunk in porportion making me a mellow giant dizzy from exaggerated heights. (One time a man swan-dived through the ceiling landing in a pool of vapor) While two clowns did cartwheels in rhythm to the music of pounding stones the ring-leader flung a hatchet into a brick wall then crashed sets of dishes in a crazy porcelene sink till the noise drowned out the orchestra playing Mozart in the corner to no one because no one would listen. A pizza was delivered with a bomb that went off, stealing all the furniture, leaving us on the floor naked like Budda said nothing from nothing is everything is nothing is all is nothing is life so just try it. Windows were boarded and barred to keep out the army of militant government righteous wingers; pictures they wanted of the inside and proof, . . . we'll cut holes in the panels and photograph them with their pants caught down running with a hop behind a veiling bush that grew a brown leaf men harvested and smoked rolled raging fire, . . . melting the lungs. We breathed our air of dancing girls and carnival stares and howling laughter and flying bottles to pieces they go for no other reason but to see what will happen after the explosion. Testing. Three stooges slap each other silly till fatigue. Resting. The clock on the wall never stops, always watching with it's face that we recognize. Who would object to the antics of the children hiding in the floorboards at dawns chill crystal day? Invitations only, invitations only, the world is invited, invitations only. Let me see some I.D. it can not be you, the gate comes down, entrapping the victims later seen looking for a lawyer on a wrinkled wet match book found under the sink next to a roach swimming in a puddle of clorox. The Lady of the house is out turning tricks for a magical pimp waving wond on a rainbow. He asks for her hand, she exposes her wrists which he slashes in remembrance of the moment. Operating expenses are sky-rocketing,—adding onto the final cost what no one can afford except those righting their account number in the write colums but today the bank is closed, come on up, we'll loan you the dough, if you do us one favor to release the prisoners stashed in the closet; they've been kidnapped with consent of their own kind. The cartwheeling clowns now run up the wall, where is the gravity? mad it's gone mad. The ring-leader pulls a sheet to cover his eyes, . . . allowing more freedom. It's so kind of him, . . . or,—at least that's what he tells the clowns in a septic tongue needing to be deciphered while they cling to tin ceilings high above his reach long after the last guest has left for good. The clowns cry tears rain down out their eyes toward the floor, . . . something is happening, . . . the floodgates have busted and waves rush through the quarters, easing out your mind bobbing buoyant against wall cracking plaster as little by little it will all seep out, . . . including the dirt lines sunk deep filling pores, . . . all will be cleansed I mean everything/nothing, just to start it over again.

Steven Dominic Prestianni

"Mathew, although he was the emcee, would never tell you to get off the stage or be judgemental about the nature of your work, in fact no one was judgemental, it was all very supportive and accepting, there was only one time that I ever saw mathew pass a judgement on a piece, and that was mine. I had just broken up with a woman who I had cared alot about and was feeling bitter about it, she also came a lot to the open mic, and I had written this piece that was about me really venting violent fantasies about this woman, a and the walls were screaming at me 'she's not here' and other stuff, and I let out a lot of spleen about her and then I admitted that I was just a jerk, and that was the piece. But just before I was going to do it, she walked into the gallery and sat down, and I decided to do it anyways, and yea, it was

violent & childish, and everyone knew what it was about and afterwards mathew called me an asshole. I also remember in the winter time there was no heat and people would sit huddled in enourmous jackets and blankets and that kids would throw snowballs in through the mail slot."

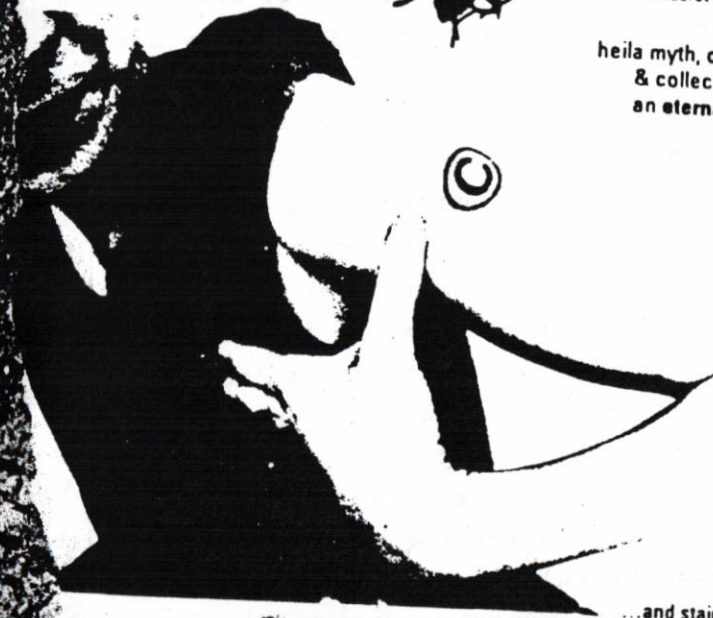
-Roger Manning

One of the distinguishing characteristics of Mathews Caberet, as opposed to the various other open mics scattered around the city, was its tolerance for eccentricity and marginal points of view which were not to be found in the 'club scene'. On the one hand, there are those who define themselves as poets or performance artists who cultivate the lifestyle of consistently writing about their experience and seeking out reading venues around the city, and then there are those who would not define themselves in this manner at all and yet, just by standing up & speaking about anything at all they are able to amuse and captivate an audience with the authenticity of thier personalitys. These were the eccentrics, crackpots, ideologues and neighborhood characters which NO RIO has always drew its share of. Robin Goldsmith remembers a woman named Debbi who was a regular for a while, "She was this older woman from the projects in Queens who would come in and just give these rants about strange boyfreinds and her different medications and people who had

pissed her off on the way to NO RIO. Another guy, this old man in a cheap suit, played kazoo and would dance the charlston and read from an art theory textbook". Baron Von Blumenzack recalls the time Lenny was having a serious argument with Sara Briterose in the hallway and he kicked her in the stomach and pulled out a straightrazor.

In addition to theatre pieces and occasional readings from T.S. Eliot, Robin Goldsmith performed, along with John Marac, in a semi regular act called Velveeta Tureen. She would sing 'Oklahoma' in a German accent, or John would interview Robin as Marlene Dietrich who would say "Ah only wisten tew Amewicon mewsik".

fly...fascion state



fascion fashista

Alter Nation

everybody who wears white has the secret desire to become a laboratory rat

heila myth, of the inspirational network & collection agency, demonstrates an eternal scarration by urania 235

...the idea is not to infringe on skin
...this is the original shirt on your back
...this is what your mother did to you
...yes
...it is the most functional garment you will ever own but WATCH OUT!!
...don't get any holes in it or shrink it up!
...and stains...look out for stains...

fascion is the idea that action occupying space is in danger of being accessorized in accordance with the brutality of subliminal appearance as translated to group civilization...

the process of how you perceive your appearance becomes the ritualization of your personal idea of four dimensional communication...clothing is the external symtom of the desire to remain intact...

the fashista...the definition...centralized autocratic people assembled in an orderly garment or style exalting statement above the individual with a tendancey toward or actual exercise of dress or custom molded severely by economic and social regimentation...early instances of dress or conduct with the use of imagination and ingenuity and brutality...to mold into a particualr character by influencing or training...

the young man to the right is wearing forks on his head...unlike many other stylish hats this design allows the prongs to dig into the scalp...thus preventing the wind from blowing off this valuable accessory...

